



A LEVEL – YEAR 12 – THEOLOGY – CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes	Key Themes
<p>A. Joseph Fletcher's Situation Ethics - his rejection of other forms of ethics and his acceptance of agape as the basis of morality: Fletcher's rejection of other approaches within ethics: legalism, antinomianism and the role of conscience; Fletcher's rationale for using the religious concept of 'agape' (selfless love) as the 'middle way' between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism; the biblical evidence used to support this approach: the teachings of Jesus (Luke 10:25:37) and St Paul (1 Corinthians 13). Situation Ethics as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.</p> <p>B. Fletcher's Situation Ethics - the principles as a means of assessing morality: The basic principle of Situation Ethics (following the concept of agape); the four working principles (pragmatism, relativism,</p>	<p>D. Classical Utilitarianism - Jeremy Bentham's Act Utilitarianism: happiness as the basis of morality: Bentham's theory of 'utility' or 'usefulness'; ultimate aim is to pursue pleasure and avoid pain; principle of utility ('the greatest happiness for the greatest number'). The hedonic calculus as a means of measuring pleasure in each unique moral situation; by considering seven factors: intensity, duration, certainty, remoteness, fecundity, purity and extent. Act Utilitarianism as a form of moral relativism, a consequentialist and teleological theory.</p> <p>E. John Stuart Mill's development of Utilitarianism: types of pleasure, the harm principle and the use of rules: Mill's idea that not all pleasure is the same: 'higher pleasures' (intellectual) are superior to 'lower pleasures' (basic physical pleasure); the</p>	<p>A. St Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law - laws and precepts as the basis of morality: Aquinas' four levels of law (eternal, divine, natural and human); Natural Law derived from rational thought; based on a belief in a divine creator (the highest good as being the rational understanding of God's final purpose). Natural Law as a form of moral absolutism and a theory which has both deontological and teleological aspects. The five primary precepts (preservation of life, ordered society, worship of God, education and reproduction of the human species) as derived from rational thought and based on the premise of 'doing good and avoiding evil'; the secondary precepts which derive from the primary precepts; the importance of keeping the precepts in order to establish a right relationship with God and gain eternal life with God in heaven.</p>	<p>Divine Command Theory: God as the origin and regulator of morality; right or wrong as objective truths based on God's will/command, moral goodness is achieved by complying with divine command; divine command a requirement of God's omnipotence; divine command as an objective meta-physical foundation for morality. Robert Adams' 'Modified Divine Command Theory' (divine command based on God's omnibenevolence). Challenges: the Euthyphro dilemma (inspired by Plato); arbitrariness problem (divine command theory renders morality as purely arbitrary); pluralism objection (different religions claim different divine commands).</p> <p>B. Virtue Theory: Ethical system based on defining the personal qualities that make a person moral; the focus on a person's</p>	<p>A. Religious concepts – the nature of God: Is God male? The issue of male language about God; the pastoral benefits and challenges of the model of Father; Sallie McFague and God as Mother. Can God suffer? The impassibility of God; the modern view of a suffering God illustrated by Jurgen Moltmann (The Crucified God).</p> <p>B. Religious concepts – the Trinity: The need for the doctrine of the Trinity: the nature and identity of Christ (issues of divinity and preexistence) and Christ's relationship with the Father (co-equal and co-eternal). The origin of the Holy Spirit: the filioque controversy.</p> <p>C. Religious concepts – the Atonement: Three theories of the Atonement (which are not mutually exclusive): the death of Jesus as Christus Victor (with reference to the liberation of humanity from hostile</p>	<p>A. Religious identity through diversity in baptism: The case for infant baptism by Augustine and Zwingli (the role of baptism in salvation; the role and importance of Christian parents); the case for believer's baptism with reference to Karl Barth (the example of Christ; importance of consent).</p> <p>B. Religious identity through diversity in Eucharist: The importance of the Eucharist in the life of contemporary Christian communities; selected Roman Catholic theories (transubstantiation, transignification and transfinalization); selected Protestant approaches (consubstantiation and memorialism); the similarities in Eucharistic practice in Christian traditions.</p> <p>C. Religious identity through diversity in festivals: Christmas The</p>



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<p>positivism and personalism); the six fundamental principles (love is the only good, love is the ruling norm of Christianity, love equals justice, love for all, loving ends justify the means and love decides situationally).</p> <p><u>C. Fletcher’s Situation Ethics - application of theory: The application of Fletcher’s Situation Ethics</u> to both of the issues listed below: 1. homosexual relationships 2. polyamorous relationships</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The degree to which agape is the only intrinsic good. • Whether Fletcher’s Situation Ethics promotes immoral behaviour. • The extent to which Situation Ethics promotes justice. • The effectiveness of Situation Ethics in dealing with ethical issues. • Whether agape should replace religious rules. • The extent to which Situation Ethics provides a practical basis for making moral</p>	<p>‘Harm Principle’: the actions of individuals should be limited to prevent harm to other individuals; not all actions need to be morally assessed as actions are morally right if they conform to a historical rule that has demonstrated that it fulfils the principle of utility (now known as ‘Rule’ Utilitarianism). Mill’s Utilitarianism as a teleological/deontological hybrid.</p> <p><u>F. Bentham’s Act Utilitarianism and Mill’s Rule Utilitarianism - application of the theory:</u> The application of Bentham’s Act Utilitarianism and Mill’s Rule Utilitarianism to both of the issues listed below: 1. animal experimentation for medical research 2. the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The degree to which pleasure can be seen as the sole intrinsic good. • The extent to which Act and/or</p>	<p><u>B. Aquinas’ Natural Law - the role of virtues and goods in supporting moral behaviour:</u> The need for humans to be more God-like by developing the three revealed virtues (faith, hope and charity) and four cardinal virtues (fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice). Aquinas’ definition of different types of acts and goods: internal acts (the intention of the moral agent when carrying out an action) and external acts (the actions of a moral agent); real goods (correctly reasoned goods that help the moral agent achieve their telos) and apparent goods (wrongly reasoned goods that don’t help the moral agent achieve their God given purpose).</p> <p><u>C. Aquinas’ Natural Law - application of the theory:</u> The application of Aquinas’ Natural Law to both of the issues listed below: 1. abortion 2. voluntary euthanasia Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The degree to which</p>	<p>character rather than their specific actions; Aristotle’s moral virtues (based on the deficiency; the excess and the mean); Jesus’ teachings on virtues (the Beatitudes). Challenges: virtues are not a practical guide to moral behaviour; issue of cultural relativism (ideas on the good virtues are not universal); virtues can be used for immoral acts.</p> <p><u>C. Ethical Egoism:</u> Agent focused ethic based on self-interest as opposed to altruism; ethical theory that matches the moral agent’s psychological state (psychological egoism); concentration on long term self-interests rather than short term interests; Max Stirner, is self-interest the root cause of every human action even if it appears altruistic? Rejection of egoism for material gain; union of egoists. Challenges: destruction of a community ethos; social injustices could occur as individuals put their own interests first; a form of bigotry (why is one moral agent more important than any other?).</p>	<p>powers); the death of Jesus as a substitution (both the belief that Jesus died as a substitute for humanity, and the belief that only the divine-human Jesus could act as a sacrifice by God for the sake of humanity); the death of Jesus as a moral example (of how to live and die). The underlying assumptions about the need for divine forgiveness and the conflict between the wrath and love of God in theories of the Atonement.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The validity of referring to God as mother. • The theological implications of a suffering God. • The monotheistic claims of the doctrine of the Trinity. • Whether the doctrine of the Trinity is necessary to understand the God of Christianity. • The extent to which the three theories of the Atonement are contradictory. • The extent to which the three theories suggest that the Christian God is cruel.</p>	<p>similarities (with reference to the focus on incarnation of Christ) and differences (date of celebration; focus of Advent season; Christmas services) between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches’ celebration of Christmas. Easter The similarities (with reference to the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ) and differences (date; liturgical practice at Easter; the diversity within each stream of tradition) between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches’ celebration of Easter.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which both infant and adult baptism are just symbolic acts. • The criteria for expressing the commitment to be baptised. • The extent to which there is any common ground within contemporary understandings of the Eucharist. • The extent to which theoretical beliefs about the Eucharist affect the practice of different</p>
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<p>decisions for both religious believers and non-believers</p> <p>A. Inductive arguments – cosmological: Inductive proofs; the concept of ‘a posteriori’. Cosmological argument: St Thomas Aquinas’ first Three Ways - (motion or change; cause and effect; contingency and necessity). The Kalam cosmological argument with reference to William Lane Craig (rejection of actual infinities and concept of personal creator).</p> <p>B. Inductive arguments – teleological: St Thomas Aquinas’ Fifth Way - concept of governance; archer and arrow analogy. William Paley’s watchmaker - analogy of complex design. F. R. Tennant’s anthropic and aesthetic arguments - the universe specifically designed for intelligent human life.</p> <p>C. Challenges to inductive arguments: David Hume - empirical objections and critique of causes (cosmological). David Hume</p>	<p>Rule Utilitarianism works in contemporary society. • The extent to which Rule Utilitarianism provides a better basis for making moral decisions than Act Utilitarianism. • Whether Utilitarianism promotes immoral behaviour. • The extent to which Utilitarianism promotes justice. • The extent to which Utilitarianism provides a practical basis for making moral decisions for both religious believers and non-believers</p> <p>D. Deductive arguments - origins of the ontological argument Deductive proofs; the concept of ‘a priori’. St Anselm - God as the greatest possible being (Proslogion 2). St Anselm - God has necessary existence (Proslogion 3).</p> <p>E. Deductive arguments - developments of the ontological argument: Rene Descartes - concept of God as supremely perfect being; analogies of triangles and mountains/valleys. Norman Malcolm - God as unlimited being: God’s existence as</p>	<p>human law should be influenced by Aquinas’ Natural Law. • The extent to which the absolutist and/or deontological nature of Aquinas’ Natural Law works in contemporary society. • The strengths and weaknesses of Aquinas’ Natural Law. • A consideration of whether Aquinas’ Natural Law promotes injustice. • The effectiveness of Aquinas’ Natural Law in dealing with ethical issues. • The extent to which Aquinas’ Natural Law is meaningless without a belief in a creator God</p> <p>A. The problem of evil and suffering: The types of evil: moral (caused by free will agents) and natural (caused by nature). The logical problem of evil: classical (Epicurus) - the problem of suffering. J. L. Mackie’s modern development - the nature of the problem of evil (inconsistent triad). William Rowe (intense human and animal suffering) and Gregory S. Paul (premature deaths).</p> <p>B. Religious responses to the problem of evil (i):</p>	<p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • Whether morality is what God commands. • Whether being a good person is better than just doing good deeds. • Whether Virtue Theory is useful when faced with a moral dilemma. • The extent to which Ethical Egoism inevitably leads to moral evil. • The extent to which all moral actions are motivated by self-interest. • Whether one of Divine Command Theory, Virtue Theory or Ethical Egoism is superior to the other theories.</p> <p>A. Jesus – his birth: Consistency and credibility of the birth narratives (Matthew 1:18-2:23; Luke 1:26-2:40); harmonisation and redaction; interpretation and application of the birth narratives to the doctrine of the incarnation (substantial presence and the kenotic model).</p> <p>B. Jesus – his resurrection: The views of Rudolf</p>	<p>D. Religious life – faith and works: Luther’s arguments for justification by faith alone (with reference to Romans 1:17; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8- 9; Galatians 2:16 and Luther’s rejection of James 2:24); the Council of Trent as a response to Luther; E. P. Sanders and the role of works in justification.</p> <p>E. Religious life – the community of believers: The New Testament community of believers as a model for churches today (with reference to Acts 2:42-47); the role of churches in providing worship and sacraments, religious teaching, mission, service and outreach, and fellowship for the community of believers.</p> <p>F. Religious life – key moral principles: Selected key moral principles of Christianity: the importance of love of neighbour (Leviticus 19:34; Luke 10:25-28); God’s love as a potential model for Christian behaviour (Exodus 34:6-7; 1 John 4:19- 21); regard for truth (1 Samuel</p>	<p>denominations. • Whether the different emphases and practices mean that Easter is a different celebration in the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches. • The relative importance of Easter and Christmas.</p> <p>F. Issues relating to rejection of religion: Atheism: Rejection of belief in deities; the difference between agnosticism and atheism; the rise of New Atheism (antitheism); its main criticisms of religion: non-thinking; infantile worldview; impedes scientific progress. Religious responses to the challenge of New Atheism: rejection by religious groups of New Atheist claims regarding incompatibility of science and religion; increase in fundamentalist religious activity relating to morality and community; increase in religious apologists in media.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: •</p>
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<p>- problems with analogies; rejection of traditional theistic claims: designer not necessarily God of classical theism; apprentice god; plurality of gods; absent god (teleological). Alternative scientific explanations including Big Bang theory and Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • Whether inductive arguments for God’s existence are persuasive. • The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing. • The effectiveness of the cosmological/teleological argument for God’s existence. • Whether cosmological/teleological arguments for God’s existence are persuasive in the 21st century. • The effectiveness of the challenges to the cosmological/teleological argument for God’s existence. • Whether scientific explanations are more persuasive than</p>	<p>necessary rather than just possible</p> <p><u>F. Challenges to the ontological argument:</u> Gaunilo, his reply to St Anselm; his rejection of the idea of a greatest possible being that can be thought of as having separate existence outside of our minds; his analogy of the idea of the greatest island as a ridicule of St Anselm’s logic. Immanuel Kant’s objection - existence is not a determining predicate: it cannot be a property that an object can either possess or lack.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which ‘a priori’ arguments for God’s existence are persuasive. • The extent to which different religious views on the nature of God impact on arguments for the existence of God. • The effectiveness of the ontological argument for God’s existence. • Whether the ontological argument is more persuasive than the</p>	<p>Augustinian type theodicy: Evil as a consequence of sin: evil as a privation; the fall of human beings and creation; the Cross overcomes evil, soul-deciding; challenges to Augustinian type theodicies: validity of accounts in Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3; scientific error - biological impossibility of human descent from a single pair (therefore invalidating the ‘inheritance of Adam’s sin’); moral contradictions of omnibenevolent God and existence of Hell; contradiction of perfect order becoming chaotic - geological and biological evidence suggests the contrary.</p> <p><u>C. Religious responses to the problem of evil</u> (ii): Irenaean type theodicy: Vale of soul-making: human beings created imperfect; epistemic distance; second-order goods; eschatological justification; challenges to Irenaean type theodicies: concept of universal salvation unjust; evil and suffering should not be used as a tool by an omnibenevolent God; immensity of suffering and</p>	<p>Bultmann and N.T. Wright on the relation of the resurrection event to history; interpretation and application to the understanding of death, the soul, resurrected body and the afterlife, with reference to Matthew 10:28; John 20-21; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 1:21-24.</p> <p><u>C. The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority in daily life:</u> The ways in which the Bible is considered authoritative: as a source of moral advice (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Luke 6:36-37); as a guide to living (Psalm 119:9-16; Psalm 119:105-112); as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life (Genesis 1:26-28; Ecclesiastes 9:5-9) and as a source of comfort and encouragement (Psalm 46:1-3; Matthew 6:25).</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which the birth narratives provide insight into the doctrine of the incarnation. • The relative importance of</p>	<p>12:24; Ephesians 4:25-27); the role of conscience (2 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Timothy 1:5); and the need for forgiveness (Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:12-13).</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which both faith and works are aspects of justification. • The extent to which the New Testament letters support arguments for justification by faith alone. • Whether the main role of the Church is to provide religious teaching. • The extent to which contemporary Christian churches should follow the New Testament model. • Whether love of neighbour is the most important moral principle in Christianity. • The extent to which God’s behaviour towards humans is the basis for Christian morality.</p> <p><u>D. Religious belief as a product of the human mind</u> – Sigmund Freud: Religion as an illusion and/or a neurosis with reference to</p>	<p>How far religious belief can be considered a neurosis. • The adequacy of Freud’s explanation of religious belief. • The extent to which Jung was more positive than Freud about the idea of God. • The effectiveness of empirical approaches as critiques of Jungian views on religion. • The success of atheistic arguments against religious belief. • The extent to which religious responses to New Atheism have been successful</p>
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<p>philosophical explanations for the universe's existence</p>	<p>cosmological/teleological arguments for God's existence. • The effectiveness of the challenges to the ontological argument for God's existence. • The extent to which objections to the ontological argument are persuasive</p>	<p>unequal distribution of evil and suffering.</p> <p>Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as: • The extent to which the classical form of the problem of evil is a problem. • The degree to which modern problem of evil arguments are effective in proving God's non existence. • Whether Augustinian type theodicies are relevant in the 21st century. • The extent to which Augustine's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism. • Whether Irenaean type theodicies are credible in the 21st century. • The extent to which Irenaeus's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of Classical Theism.</p>	<p>redaction criticism for understanding the biblical birth narratives. • The nature of the resurrected body. • The historical reliability of the resurrection. • The relative value of the Bible as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life. • The extent to which the Psalms studied offer a guide to living for Christians</p>	<p>collective neurosis; primal horde; Oedipus complex; wish fulfilment and reaction against helplessness. Supportive evidence including reference to redirection of guilt complexes and reference to instinctive desires deriving from evolutionary basis (Charles Darwin). Challenges including lack of anthropological evidence for primal horde; no firm psychological evidence for universal Oedipus complex; evidence basis too narrow.</p> <p><u>E. Religious belief as a product of the human mind</u> – Carl Jung: Religion necessary for personal growth with reference to: collective unconscious; individuation; archetypes; the God within. Supportive evidence including recognition of religion as a source of comfort and promotion of positive personal and social mindsets arising from religious belief. Challenges including lack of empirical evidence for Jungian concepts and reductionist</p>	
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Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks	Assessment / Composite Tasks
AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay Mock	AO1 Essay AO2 Essay